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SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE SITUATION WITH
REGARD TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF
INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES
AND PEOPLES

MILITARY ACTIVITIES AND ARRANGEMENTS BY COLONIAL POWERS IN TERRITORIES UNDER THEIR ADMINISTRATION WHICH MIGHT BE IMPEDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES

GUAM

Working paper prepared by the Secretariat

A. General

1. The United States Air Force and Navy maintain major military installations on Guam; the Coast Guard and the Army Corps of Engineers also have facilities. More than 16,188 hectares, or about 30 per cent of the island's total area, are reserved for the use of the Department of Defense. In addition, the military controls approximately 324 hectares of "land-locked properties", according to information received from the Organization of People for Indigenous Rights of Guam, by the Subcommittee on Small Territories, Petitions, Information and Assistance, at its 642nd meeting, on 1 May 1992. 1/

2. In January 1990, there were 9,688 active duty military personnel on Guam comprised of the following: Navy, 6,391; Air Force, 2,682; Army, 56; Marines, 377; and Coast Guard, 182. There were, in addition, 9,780 dependants and 1,336 military retirees. In 1989, prior to the removal of the B-52 squadrons from Guam and the relocation of personnel, there had been 10,699 military personnel. 2/

3. With the expected transfer to Guam of 1,300 military personnel as a result of the closing of the Subic Bay Naval Base and the Cubi Point Naval Air

Station in the Philippines, the total number of military personnel in the Territory is expected to return to the 1989 level.

4. Military spending, which is a major source of revenue for the Territory, amounted to over US$ 697 million 3/ in fiscal year 1990.

5. For many years, Andersen Air Force Base was the major military installation on Guam, home to the 43rd Bombardment Wing of the Third Division. That group included nuclear-capable B-52 bombers, which were deployed within the framework of Strategic Air Command operations in the Pacific and Asia.

6. In May 1968, Air Force officials announced that the Andersen Air Force Base had become non-nuclear. By 30 September 1990, all B-52 bombers had departed from Andersen Air Force Base and the 43rd Bombardment Wing had been deactivated. A new unit, the 633rd Air Base Wing, was activated on 1 October 1989 and assigned to provide support and services for various units at Andersen Air Force Base. 4/

7. Andersen Air Force Base has been for some time a prime emergency landing site in the Pacific for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration space shuttle programme. Facilities are being upgraded to accommodate specialized equipment.

8. A 16-hectare landfill on Andersen Air Force Base has been classified as a hazardous and toxic waste site. The landfill is located over Guam's aquifer, the Territory's sole source of drinking water. The Environmental Protection Agency has allocated $28 million to assist in clean-up efforts, the second highest allocation of all Pacific air bases. 5/ The Air Force plans to close the site completely by the year 2000.

9. As previously reported (A/AC.109/1070), there are a number of naval facilities on Guam: the Santa Rita Naval Magazine; the naval air stations at Brewer Field and Apra Harbour; the naval communications station at Barrigada and the communications annex at Finegayan; and the naval processing station at Ritedian Point. Guam is also a base for the repair, maintenance and provisioning of the Seventh Fleet and Polaris submarines, as well as the home port of five naval vessels.

10. The Naval Communication Area Master Station, located on Guam since 1906, coordinates all naval communications in Japan, the Philippines, Australia and Diego Garcia and provides fleet communications support to ships operating in the western Pacific Ocean and the Indian Ocean. 4/

11. The territorial Government has requested the consolidation of the 890-hectare Agana Naval Air Station with the 8,903-hectare Andersen Air Force Base to allow for expanded use of the facilities by the civilian airport, which currently shares the area and facilities with the Agana Naval Air Station. 6/ Members of the House Armed Services Committee visited Guam in December 1990 and July 1991 to re-examine the proposed consolidation.

12. A new United States Coast Guard cutter - the 34-metre Assateague - has been based in Guam since November 1990 and is assigned to conduct search-and-rescue missions. 4/

13. In May 1991, Singaporean military personnel underwent routine training exercises in Guam. 7/

14. One thousand troops from Guam participated in Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm. 8/

15. The question of the transfer of excess military land to the Government of Guam for economic development has been under continuous review by the military since 1977 (see A/AC.109/1069, paras. 42-48). In May 1990, the House Armed Services Committee was reported to have endorsed legislation introduced by Ben Blaz, Guam's non-voting delegate to the House of Representatives, aimed at stepping up efforts to return the excess land.

B. Action taken by the General Assembly

16. On 11 December 1991, the General Assembly adopted resolution 46/68, of which part B, section VI, related to Guam. The Assembly, inter alia, noted that the second round of negotiations between the United States Government and the Government of Guam aimed at the transfer of land and facilities at the Agana Naval Air Station had commenced in July 1991. The Assembly called upon the administering Power to ensure that the presence of military bases and installations in Guam should not constitute an obstacle to the implementation of the Declaration or hinder the population from exercising its right to self-determination and independence in conformity with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

C. Position of the administering Power

17. In a statement to the Subcommittee on Small Territories at its 636th meeting, on 29 July 1991, the representative of the United States said that federal and military officials, including Mr. James A. Baker III, Secretary of State, Mr. Dick Chaney, Secretary of Defense and Mr. Edward J. Derwinski, Secretary, Veteran Affairs Department, had maintained a continuing dialogue with territorial leaders regarding the consolidation of military bases and the return of excess land. In addition, Mr. Richard Armitage, the official responsible for negotiations with the Philippines on the question of United States bases there, had met with Guamanian leaders on five occasions and briefed them on the possible impact on Guam of the expected closure of Clark Air Base by September 1992.

Notes

1/ United Nations press release, GA/COL/2833, 1 May 1992.

2/ 1990 Guam Annual Economic Review, pp. 32 and 102.

3/ The local currency is the United States dollar (US$).

4/ 1990 Guam Annual Economic Review, pp. 32 and 33.

5/ Pacific Daily News, 5 and 12 February 1992.

6/ Ibid., 10 June 1991.

7/ Ibid., 18 March 1992.

8/ Ibid., 1 January 1992.